



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

ROUND TABLE MEETING DISCUSSES GLOBAL FUND-RELATED TECHNICAL SUPPORT ISSUES

Twenty global health leaders, implementers and advocates met in mid-January in England for a two-day “Round Table” of informal discussion on two closely related topics: first, how to ensure that implementers of Global Fund grants can have access to adequate and appropriate technical support; and second, what changes this might require in inter-agency collaboration between the Global Fund, UNAIDS, WHO, World Bank, DFID, PEPFAR, the Gates Foundation and others. The meeting was sponsored by a steering committee that was entirely independent of those agencies; it was organized by Aidspan, publisher of GFO; and it was funded and hosted by a retired philanthropist and his wife.

The Round Table was treated as an opportunity for participants to take institutional hats off and think more broadly about how global agencies and stakeholders can work together most productively in support of Global Fund grants.

Participants spoke in their personal capacities, and “Chatham House Rules” applied – participants were free to reveal who was present and what broad ideas were discussed, but not to reveal the details of what was said or who said it. There was no attempt to agree on recommendations; the idea instead was to hear and respond to candid assessments of problems and creative ideas for dealing with them, and then to go home and discuss possible new approaches within and between specific agencies.

The conversation focussed on three broad problem areas: First, that technical support needs are usually identified and met too late in the Global Fund grant cycle. Second, that the technical support that is provided often does not meet grantee needs; in particular, it usually does not build local capacity. And third, that Global Fund partners need to collaborate more effectively regarding technical support provision.

The following participants attended: Global Fund: Nosa Orobato, GF Director of Operations; and Bernhard Schwartlander, GF Performance Evaluation and Policy Director. UN entities: Peter Piot, UNAIDS Executive Director; Kevin De Cock, WHO Dept of HIV/AIDS Director; and Debrework Zewdie, World Bank Global HIV/AIDS Program Director. Bilateral agencies: Mark Dybul, US Global AIDS Coordinator (head of PEPFAR); Carole Presern, Counsellor, United Kingdom Mission in Geneva (representing DFID); and Sigrun Mogedal, Norway AIDS Ambassador. Foundations: Todd Summers, Gates Foundation; and Kasia Malinowska-Sempruch, Open Society Institute. Providers of technical support: Fareed Abdullah, International HIV/AIDS Alliance Director of Technical Support; and Carrie Hessler Radelet, John Snow International Director of DC operations. South governments: Caroline Kayonga, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Health and CCM Chair, Rwanda; Dr Suwit, Thailand MOH Senior Advisor and former Vice Chair of GF board; and Paulo Teixeira, former head of Brazil's national AIDS programme. Civil society: Alex Coutinho, The AIDS Support Organization of Uganda (TASO) Executive Director; Lillian Mworeko, International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS, East Africa Regional Coordinator; Asia Russell, Incoming GF board member and Director of International Policy, Health GAP; and Richard Burzynski, ICASO Executive Director. Secretariat: Bernard Rivers, Aidspace Executive Director, serving as meeting facilitator; and Chris Collins, Aidspace Round Table Coordinator.

Within the next two months, Aidspace will publish a white paper on technical support issues that draws upon the various input papers that were provided to the Round Table participants. A summary of one of those input papers is provided in the next article.

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